(b) whether the production of fertilizers has declined heavily during the earlier months of the current year;

(c) if so, whether the Government are exploring the possibilities of starting joint ventures with foreign countries in this field to supply fertilizers to farmers at reasonable rates; and

(d) if so, the main features of the plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI SIS RAM OLA) (a) The following measures have been taken to ensure development of the Indian fertilizer industry and optimum utilisation of its capacity :

(i) The domestic urea industry is supported through the retention price-cum-subsidy scheme.

(ii) Assistance is provided to the fertilizer industry for recurring linkages of feedstock, fuel and rail movement.

(iii) Liquid petroleum products used as feedstock and fuel in fertilizer plants are supplied at concessional price.

(iv) As a part of the Government's liberalisation policy, no industrial licence is now required for setting up a fertilizer plant.

(v) Investment in the fertilizer sector is encouraged, inter-alia through concessions on supplies of capital goods for the fertilizer industry in the form of import duty exemption and deemed export benefits, as well as interest rate concession on long term loans raised by fertilizer units.

(vi) The rate of special concession on indigenously manufactured DAP has been enhanced w.e.f. 6.7.1996 from Rs. 1000/- per tonne to Rs. 3000/- per tonne. Proportionate increase in the rate of concession has been allowed in respect of other complex fertilizers. In respect of SSP, the rate of special concession has been enhanced from Rs. 340/- per tonne to Rs. 500/-per tonne.

(b) During the period of April-October 1996, the production of nitrogen and phosphate fertilizers was 46.95 lakh MT and 13.89 lakh MT, respectively against the pro-rata target of 49.52 lakh MT of Nitrogen and 15.67 lakh MT of phosphate fertilizers.

(c) and (d). Due to constraints in the availability of gas, which is the preferred feedstock for the production of nitrogenous fertilizers, and the overwhelming dependence of the country on imported raw material for the production of phosphatic fertilizers, Government is encouraging Indian Companies to have joint venture production facilities, with buy-back arrangements, in other countries which have rich reserves of natural gas and rock phosphate. A joint venture project in Jordan to produce 2.24 lakh tonnes of phosphatic fertilizers per annum is expected to be commissioned by middle of 1997. A Memorandum of Understanding has also been signed between the Government of India/KRIBHCO/RCF and the Government of Sultanate of Oman/Oman Oil Company for setting up a joint venture in Oman for production of 14.5 lakh tonne of urea for which a Detailed Feasibility Report has been prepared. A pre-feasibility report for setting up of a joint venture nitrogenous fertilizer project in Iran is under finalisation.

[English]

Production of Lac

2665. SHRI BIR SINGH MAHATO: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the annual production of lac in the country is decreasing during the last two years;

(b) if so, the details of production achieved so far against the target fixed, State-wise and the reasons for decrease in the production;

(c) whether any Central scheme has been formulated by the Government for the development of this agro-based industry, and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (EXCLUDING THE DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING) (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) The annual production during the last two years has not decreased compared with the average annual production from 1988 to 1993.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) (i) The Indian Council of Agricultural Research is implementing a plan scheme to support the Indian Lac Research Institute, Ranchi which is engaged in research on different aspects of Lac production and processing and imparting training and taking up front line demonstration. This Institute have developed a number of technologies for lac production, processing and utilisation, out of which 25 have been transferred. (ii) Institute of Forest Productivity under Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) is maintaining nucleus brood lac farms for supply of brood lac to the growers, besides imparting training, giving demonstrations and incentives for improved methods of cultivation.

[Translation]

Spastic Children

2666. SHRI RAJENDRA AGNIHOTRI: Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have set up institutes in various States for imparting training and education to the spastic children;